

Conversation with 41 year old black male, Detroit, Michigan (Transcription)

W92 <unintelligible text>

0072.1 FW: Can you remember some of the games that you used to play with the kids when you were young, with your friends, in grade school...IN: Uh in grade school or, or uh, outside? You mean both in school and out of school? FW: Outside of school, after school let out. IN: Well, one of the ones I had a lot of fun with was a game we called Pom-pom-pull-away, I remember that. FW: How do you play that? IN: Uh, let's

0072.2 see--it's one of these games that was played, uh, where kids would line up on one side of a yard or street, and, uh, uh, a youngster in the center would say "Pom pom pull away get your horse and run away." And when he says that, then everyone would have to run over to the other side, and this kid would tag someone, and when he tags him, then uh, that person would have to stay in the center of the street, and as you can

0072.3 see, as you went on, more and more would get into the center of the street and it becomes more and more difficult for those, uh, on the other side to get across, and so. This is one of them, and...you usually wound up with one person who uh was, last and who won. FW: What were some of the other games? IN: Uh, that one I remember because I enjoyed it so much. FW: Did you ever play one where kids go and

0072.4 hide and one goes looking for them? IN: Oh, hide in seek! Yeah, we used to play that. FW: How did you get the person who was it? IN: uh, how did we do that? It seems to me that uh we'd--it--I don't know whether we wanted to be it the first time or not. And

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we could--it seems that I can remember, "I'm it!" "I'm it!" "I'm it!" "No, I'm it" and this sort of thing But, uh...I've forgotten. I'm sorry--I

0072.5 wish I could tell you, but I've forgotten. And we might have pulled straws. You know how you, uh... FW: Uh, did they ever say any rhymes? IN: Yes, but--trying to--we had many of them; but I can't remember. You mean during the it- uh, uh, thing? Um, uh "I got up to let them in"-- I'm trying to think of uh--of how it went on it went on (garble): "Hit them on the head with a rolling pin"--I can remember

0072.6 that part of it, but I can't remember the beginning of <unintelligible text> marbles? IN: Yes. FW: Did you ever have any names for them, or how did you play marbles? IN: Well, we had our, uh, we had names. We had boulders, we had, uh, the regular marbles what else did we have? We had several expressions. We had an expression, "hunching," I guess it was called. Hunches are somethinh like--uh If you pushed the marble when you

0072.7 shot it, we called that hunching, I guess--which is just, uh, (an) expression--I don't know what is now. FW: Anything else that you can think of? IN: Uh, about marbles--gee, I can't uh recall now other than--we had the boulders, we had let's see, agates, too, was another name that we called them. And then we had--I just can't all these terms are in the back of my mind, but they kinda FW: What about the one that you'd

0072.8 shoot with--did you ever call it anything? IN: What did we call that? That wasn't the boulder--the boulders are big ones Uh, I can't recall--there was a special name, but I can't recall. FW: Uh, any other games that you played like-- IN: Like marbles? We had this game Duck on the Rock which was with tin cans in the ally. FW: (How did you play that?) IN: I'm trying to--We put a brick in the center of the alley, and uh one kid--I

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0072.9 guess who was it again--we'd put his can on the uh, stone brick. Then uh, uh--oh, everyone-- I'm trying to think of how it started. It didn't start that way. And--oh! We had--we drew a line--a chalk line or some kind of line and then we stood back and everyone had to throw their cans toward this line. Now the one who was, uh farthest away from the line, I think it was the one who was farthest away--would be the one whose

0072.10 can had to go on the rock, you understand? All right, the rest of them uh--no, it wasn't a line. It was a rock, in the cen center of the alley, and everyone had to throw their cans towards this uh rock. All right, the can that was, I guess, the farthest farthest away from the rock was the one that was it, and then he had to come and put his can on the rock, and then everyone stood over the can, All right. Now you had to lean

0072.11 over and pick up your can and throw <unintelligible text> without him seeing you pick up your can, and if he saw you--I don't know whether he chased you, or not, or hit you, or tried to reach you, or what it was--but you tried to knock his can off of the rock, and what the objective was, I've forgotten now, but we use to have a lot of fun playing it. FW: Yeah, I can imagine that would be a lot of

0072.12 fun, that would be sort of in an alley (where) you can do that. IN: That's right, yeah. You tried to knock his can off, and if you uh if you knocked it off, then he'd have to run and get it and put it back in; in the mean time--put it back on--before he could uh tag you. He couldn't tag anyone with his can off the rock, that was the way, that's the (garble), yeah, I can't remember all the particulars, but we had a

0072.13 lot of fun. FW: Any other games that you can remember? IN: Uh, what are some of the other games--we used to have so many of them! Some of them our parents didn't call; you know, didn't care for... No, we spent a lot of our time with a lot of little hobbies,

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too. I guess you're interested only in games right now, though. Yeah. FW: What were some of the hobbies that you just-- IN: Oh, used to make a lot

0072.14 of model airplanes, used to fly 'em --make them, and fly then, and break them, we went through a stage where we were just model airplane crazy; uh underground bunks. We dug uh a hole in the ground one time six feet deep, and, I guess six feet wide, and then put-- It was in a field, and put uh, shored it a up--put the ground back, put all the grass and everything back, and uh had a stove, down under there, with a pipe

0072.15 coming up out of the ground. Then uh this was actually dangerous, though, because it was one of these old uh oil stoves that we put under there with a pipe up from the ground; that was the only thing coming up from under the ground. Oh, the lady across the street, uh, found out about it, and she made--called the police and made us cover it up, but uh it was the underground bunk, and then read uh about the

0072.16 Wright Brothers one time.. We were going to take this <unintelligible text> and jump off the garage and fly it. And we called ourselves the Wrong Brothers. And uh uh we got into an argument as to who was going to fly it, and I guess it was a good thing we did and it never got off the ground, although we drew a lot of plans. We were going to cover it, make it out of bamboo, and cover it with canvas and what not. FW: What are your

0072.17 favorite TV programs? IN: Um, I guess uh Huntley Brinkley would be one of mine, Scope--they're running that Vietname series now, Scope--uh uh I'm not too much for some of the more popular programs. FW: You watch mostly the news then? IN: Yeah, this is what I'm mostly interested in--Lou Gordon, Channel 50 Sports, and Channel 50--if there wasn't Channel 50 I don't know what I'd do. FW: Uh, what about the Vietnam

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0072.18 program, what do you think about it? What have they been showing? IN: I think it's terrific. I think they give oh, insight into the Vietnam problem. It's pretty hard to get otherwise, I mean they're presenting pro and con. And, uh, uh, I think it's a tremendous series. Only thing I think most people is uh--I think it comes on the same time as other probably more popular programs come on and people who ought to be seeing it

0072.19 don't see it, and consequently when the issue comes up they react on an emotional basis rather than on a rational basis. FW: What do you think about the Vietnam problem. IN: Well, I think it's uh it's uh one of these things where uh persons who were familiar with the Communistic doctrine and its tenets aren't going to be beguiled by the fact that they're saying that this an internal revolution. It's not. It's one,

0072 20 it's a war of liberation, so-called, uh fostered by the theory that Mao Tse-Tung has put forth. He, Mao Tse-Tung uh admits that he made a mistake in Korea in using the traditional type of invasion to foster a Communist doctrine, so to speak, and so he's developed this theory of guerilla warfare which he says will succeed in uh in bringing about the tenets of Communism throughout the world. And so uh he's out to prove this

0072.21 in South Vietnam. This is the critical thing if it's successful there, then uh then it can be successful in many other parts of the world. And uh well to show the suc--uh that the United States is on the right track as far as I'm concerned. Now, you can get arguments from all kinds of quarters as soon as people in other parts of the world found out that the United States was going to stick up for a small country,

0072.22 and that it wasn't lip service and that it wasn't a paper tiger, you saw what happened. Uh, in Indonesia, you saw what happened, uh Communist party was thrown out completely. You've seen what's happened in Africa, in a number of countries of Africa,

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you've seen uh uh the Dominican Republic, the United States had to move in there at the time, uh regardless of what uh what persons would say about "well, it's none of our

0072.23 business"--it is our business. If someone considers the tenents of Communism, as they were written back in the middle of the last century, and as uh many of these people believe in, and are dedicated to. Now the question is are we dedicated to the principles we believe in, in our Country, many of us aren't, and so it's kind of hard for us to...FW: Do you think that the Americans in general understand the

0072.24 principles. IN: No, I don't. FW: (continues) IN: I'm sorry, I answered you too soon. Do I, you're saying, Do I think Amer FW: Americans understand the principles of the country, of our country? IN: No, I don't think so--I think they give lip service to it, and uh by and large I don't thin they really understand. Let's put it this way--the average American going overseas to a foreign country, if he becomes

0072.25 involved in an argument, in which Communist knows what he's arguing about, the average American does not what he's arguing about, and yet it shouldn't be that way because, as the principles upon which our society is based are such, that he shouldn't have to be on the defensive when arguing with a Communist, but unfortunately too many of them, as I say, aren't watching programs like Scope, and some of these other

0072.26 things would give them the in-depth of understanding of -- and <unintelligible text> uh more the...just uh the fact that Americans are dropping bombs on poor defenseless people, so to speak, uh they don't read the important story here, and so uh...FW: Now, back to when you were young again--was there anything that you could do to get a wish to come true. IN: Anything that I could do, uh yes--uh I wanted a model airplane. How did I get it? Well, I went

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0072.27 around, tried collecting uh pop bottles at that time there were deposits on these bottles, I'd go around, I'd find as many of them I could, and uh turn them in and get the money and buy a model airplane. FW: Were there any rhymes or anything or any kind of superstitions things you could do in addition to your practices? IN: Oh yes, but--trying to remember things, we had all kinds of little things. FW: Did you do anything

0072.28 with the wishbone--chicken bone? IN: Yeah, dry it out and break it and the one, the end that had the tip on it was uh was the lucky one, he'd make a wish, you'd have to wish silently you couldn't tell anyone what you were wishing for. FW: Did you ever have anything else? IN: Wish on a star; oh! Uh, shooting star, yeah, you see a shooting star uh you'd make a wish and uh it had to be silent, that' also there were some insects I

0072.29 think, which ones I don't know, some kind of insect. FW: What would you do when you lost a tooth? IN: Put it under the pillow. FW: And what would happen? IN: Well, the fairy godmother would come and leave a little coin there. FW: Could you tell me about your grade school--what were some of the subjects you studies? IN: I think my grade school was unique, compared to the ones today. I went to Wingert here in Detroit, which is over on

0072.30 the boulevard, West Grand Boulevard, and uh Moore, and uh I studied uh the usual-- Reading, writing, arithmetic, uh I think they were using phonetics at that time though, uh we had there a manual training shop, it was called, in which we learned to use all kinds of tools, which later on became useful to me, like here in the house a lot that I've done, uh uh I think our education was unique at that time. FW: In your classroom, what were some

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0072.31 of the things you could see in it? For example, what did you sit at? IN: I generally was in the center of the class. We sat in alphabetical order, and my name being Jefferson about the middle of the alphabet so that pretty well put me in the center, As far as seeing uh--about all I saw was the teacher and the blackboard, and uh there was a flag, uh and all the little <unintelligible text> that went on in which I was a part

0072.32 of it. FW: Oh, what did you do that for? Uh, did you sit at tables or what? IN: No, these were regular student's benches-chairs, I guess they're called, desks, that let up, you know, that seat part let up, ok wells and holding (garble). FW: Okay, if you walked outside your classroom where would you be? IN: If I walked outside my classroom where would I be? Well, we walked in a line and we went from class to class in

0072.33 line, I would be in a hall if you want a specific answer--yeah. FW: And what would you find in the hall? IN: There were glass enclosures along the hall in which there were exhibits and different things that I remember and lockers all along the walls everywhere, lockers. FW: What about anything you would drink water? IN: Water fountains, strategically located, so that you could--but you couldn't--you had to have

0072.34 permission to get a drink of water when moving from class to class. FW: What's outside the school? IN: Uh, well, your playground and your uh there's the uh shrubbery <unintelligible text> FW: Anything on the playground? IN: At at time, um no. I couldn't understand this, I don't think they had any swings, during the regular school year, but they would put them there during the summer, now this was the reverse, I may be wrong, no,

0072.35 there were swings; there swings and that was about all. The large swings, but anything else, and it was a small playground, they played ball there, and I guess they were thinking in those terms too. FW: What did the kids do after they got out of school in the

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afternoon? IN: Well, went home of course and had dinner, and we'd walk home, and play all the way home, so to speak. But later we got home uh there was--when I was

0072.36 older it was hobbies--model airplanes and boats and this and that <unintelligible text> time uh we would get together and play in each other's backyards or out in the alley or old broken-down trucks and things, cars we'd drive them so to speak. FW: Did you ever have a teacher you yelled or hollered at you? IN: Yeah. FW: Would you tell me what they would holler at? IN: I think, primarily for talking, in class, she's trying to--I can

0072.37 appreciate it now as I look back--she's trying to get a trend of thought going in the class and all of a sudden here's this buzz and someone talking back there. And if it is the same individual, you know, she--had to discipline and maybe her--FW: Uh, did you ever get yelled for anything do you remember? IN: Yes, there was this teacher, <gap> who yelled at me because uh I used to make these airplane noises myself in class, as a

0072.38 matter of fact uh I had a friend tell her after I left there, uh she had commented one time that--uh this fellow was a name of Rockefeller, no, not Rocky, it was someone else who had said that there must be, must be Horace Jefferson's spirit, left here some, but this was told to me afterwards. But I did have this habit. Let's say we were so crazy about airplanes, that all we could think was, uh, how they sound, and it would just

0072.39 completely dominate our lives at that time. FW: Did you ever have a teacher you thought was really good, thought was your best teacher. IN: <gap> FW: What was it about her? IN: She was a pleasant teacher, she was kind of strict, but she was just pleasant, uh I always did like <gap> that's all I can remember she uh seemed to uh take pains with the kids and take this little extra time to explain what she was trying--

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0072.40 wanted you to learn, and uh FW: Did you ever play a trick on your teacher? IN: No, I can't recall; on another student, but not on the teacher. FW: What kind of devilment went on in class? IN: You mean me specifically, or the kids in general? IN: Were you or any one play around in the classroom? IN: Well, we used to play all kinds of games on paper and pass it around; you had to mark here and so-and-so would mark there.

0072.41 This was the idea, I guess, was just to keep from getting caught as you passed this around on books. One time I put a girl's hair in the inkwell. Another time a girl with long hair, I tied it on this, on the side of the, uh, desk, where this, well all these were wrought iron desks with, kind of, filigree; and we'd take the uh, I took her hair and tied it; it was long, they wore their hair long then, and tied it there.

0072.42 An then she's going--till she got ready to move. It was a horrible thing to do, but uh I did it. FW: Can you remember that smartest kid in your class? IN: Who was the smartest kid--Daniel Boone, no Daniel Boone-- was that his name? IN: No, not Daniel Boone, Daniel Boone was, the, uh, no, I'm thinking of, no Daniel, who was his name, he was smart. I can't think of his last name, but it must've sounded like Boone

0072.43 though. FW: Well, did he ever get any special favors or rewards or anything like that? IN: I think so, he seemed to uh, the teacher kind of--well, he was smart in all of his classes and he was pretty well known. The teachers kind of liked him, and there were a number of girls too, I can't remember their names; but Dan was uh quite a smart boy. FW: What about the dumbest kid, do you remember anyone particular?

0072.44 IN: (I) think, the best of the class...there were, but I can't remember. FW: Do you remember what the teacher used to do with them? IN: Into the corner. FW: THat was all? IN: Well, along with this so-called dumbness, I guess went the boredom, it went along with

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it, because he couldn't keep up, and couldn't catch on and uh and so he was, a nuisance and so into the corner he went and sat toward the corner, facing the corner,

0072.45 uh that's about all. FW: What time did you start school? IN: I think school started at uh 8:00, 8:30 maybe. FW: And what time did you get out in the afternoon? IN: We got out 3:30, but we came home for lunch at noontime see. FW: What time would that be? IN: I guess we left school at 12:00-- or 11:30 maybe--went back at 12:30; 11:30 to 12:30; I think that was it. FW: Have you ever gone out at 11:45? Is there

0072.46 another way you can say that? IN: 11:45, yeah, that uh, uh--15 minutes to twelve. FW: Uh, when you were young, were there a bunch of guys that you hung around with, were your buddies or your pals? IN: Yeah, they lived on the adjacent streets, uh I lived on 30th, they lived on 28th, which is the nex block over and Stanford which is a block over from that. FW: Were they about the same age as you? IN: Yes, they were about my age.

0072.47 FW: And uh, do you still associate with any of those people? IN: No, I uh see one frequently, not frequently, we visit infrequently. Now, by that, every four or five months he'll come by here and I'll go back and visit him. end M18 B(3)